

The Annual Report of Maryland's Rural Development Council

Fiscal Year 2000

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Chairman's Message:

A successful year passes; a busy one looms ahead

The Honorable William F. Eckman, Mayor, Town of La Plata

This has been an exciting year for me as Chairman of the FORVM for Rural Maryland – Maryland's Rural Development Council. Working together, we accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time.

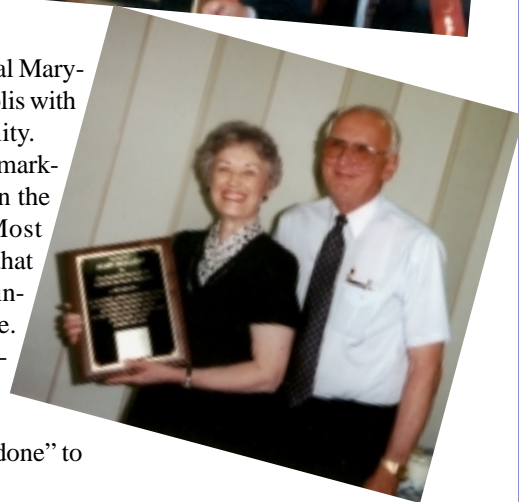
Much of our success is due to the innovative and effective leadership of my predecessor, **Duane Yoder, President of the Garrett Community Action Committee**. Mr. Yoder, who contributed mightily to this organization during the last several years, is widely respected not only by local officials and community leaders from across Rural Maryland, but also among policy makers in Annapolis with whom he has developed tremendous credibility.

Mr. Yoder's accomplishments are remarkable because he lives in Garrett County — in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. Most FORVM meetings and legislative hearings that he participated in to help Rural Marylanders involved nearly 500 miles of travel each time. That's a full day's travel even before one considers the time spent at the destination. On behalf of our organization, and all the citizens of Rural Maryland, I say "thanks" and "well done" to Duane Yoder.

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Act of 2000

I believe the most important legacy Duane Yoder left for us, and the one that will have the most long-term impact on Rural Maryland, was the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAE&RDAF) Act of 2000, which he helped craft and the General Assembly passed this year. This bill recognizes that many nonprofit organizations serving Rural Maryland

Chairman's Message continued on page 2



Above: FORVM Chairman William Eckman (left) and Executive Director Stephen McHenry (right) present a plaque of appreciation to outgoing chair Duane Yoder (center).

Below: Mayor Eckman presents outgoing Board Member Mary Mallery with a plaque of recognition. Ms. Mallery will lead the effort to form the new FORVM Foundation.



A decade of success: **National Rural Development Partnership**

In 1990, eight states were chosen as pilot states to have State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs). By late 1993, there were 33 operating SRDCs with approved budgets and hired executive directors. Maryland's SRDC began in 1994. From 1995 to 2000, no new SRDCs were added to the National Rural Development Partnership. However, in April 2000, California signed an agreement with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, making it the 37th state to join the partnership. Secretary Glickman recently signed agreements establishing state councils in Arizona, Georgia and Rhode Island.

Original Eight: Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Washington.

Others: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, **Maryland**, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Coming Soon! Arizona, Georgia and Rhode Island.

Continued: Chairman's Message, from page 1

wherewithall to finance adequately. Almost \$350,000 was appropriated to the MAE&RDAF program for FY 2001.

Passing this legislation was a great example of what House Speaker Cas Taylor urged rural folks to do at our 1998 Rural Summit. In his remarks, he said Annapolis has "big dogs and little dogs." The big dogs — the organized suburban and urban areas representing the majority of Maryland's population — have little problem getting their needs met because of their sheer size. The little dogs — the far flung rural counties collectively representing 25% of the population — cannot do much individually, but when they band together for unified action, they can accomplish a lot. This year the FORVM brought rural legislators and stakeholders together to help resolve a pressing rural dilemma.

We are indebted to our rural legislators for heeding the call, and to **Governor Parris Glendening and Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend** for helping to make the funding available. Special thanks go to **Senator Mac Middleton and members of the Eastern Shore, Western Maryland, Southern Maryland and Harford County delegations** for all their efforts. Our small but able FORVM staff also deserves credit for a job well done.

Speaking of our staff. . .

With a full-time staff of just two people, we were limited in what we could do to enhance the quality of life in Maryland's 18 rural and semi-rural counties. The MAE&RDAF Act provides the FORVM with an equal match of our modest federal appropriation, giving us the ability to hire an additional full-time staff member. I am pleased to report that Executive Director Steve McHenry has selected Vanessa Orlando to serve as the FORVM's first Communications Manager. Ms. Orlando will oversee the FORVM's publications and communications activities, and will provide staff support to two Working Committees. Look for the FORVM to be more visible in rural communities in the future.

Working Committees

Another legacy from Duane Yoder's tenure as Chairman was the estab-

lishment of Working Committees to deal with various problems that are peculiar to, or more critical in, Rural Maryland. At the recommendation of our Planning and Development Committee, the Executive Board concluded that there were eight major topical areas we needed to address, but that we only had enough resources to support three. During the Fall, 1999, we established Working Committees on rural health care, infrastructure, and agriculture and natural resources. Recently, the Board set up a fourth Working Committee on housing and community development. Duane Yoder has volunteered to organize and help staff this committee, which will begin operation in October. We plan to add new members to all four committees during our Annual Rural Summit. I encourage anyone with a special interest in these areas to volunteer to participate.

FORVM Foundation

I am pleased to report that the FORVM's Executive Board has decided to establish a FORVM for Rural Maryland Foundation in the next year. Former Board Member Mary Mallery of Hagerstown will lead this effort. The FORVM Foundation will be a stand-alone entity that will work independently toward bringing new resources into Maryland to assist the FORVM with its work.

Biggest Objective

Finally, my biggest personal objective for the coming year is to add members to the FORVM roster and increase participation in FORVM activities. We need the active involvement of people from across the state: farmers, doctors, county commissioners, teachers, nonprofit organization leaders, housewives, local agency directors, small businessmen, and, yes, even small town mayors.

Last year, we successfully laid a foundation that establishes a solid framework for our future. This year, we have a few more resources to work with, and we have a committee structure in place that is ready to respond to the needs of rural citizens. All we need now is for you to join us in our collective effort to improve the quality of life in Rural Maryland.

Together, we can accomplish more than you can image!

Program Update: Maryland farmers begin harvesting the sun



Ed and Lucie Snodgrass, a fifth generation farm family in Harford County, have taken advantage of the Harvesting the Sun - Solar for Farms program and installed a solar electric power system on their farm. The Snodgrass' farm is the third in



Maryland to install a system under this program, which is administered by The FORVM for Rural Maryland and funded through a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration.

The Snodgrass' own and operate Emory Knoll Farms where they raise perennials, small grains and livestock.

The goal of the program is to install solar electric power systems on farms throughout Maryland and promote the use of renewable energy. The grant money makes the purchase of a solar electric power system more affordable. The solar system allows farmers to produce their own energy and offset the amount of electricity they purchase from their utility company.

"The Harvesting the Sun program has finally made a solar electric power system an affordable alternative for me," said Mr. Snodgrass. "I am very excited to be able to generate a portion of my own power and make a statement by investing in a renewable energy power source."

The PV Energizer 1.2 KW system, which was installed on the Snodgrass's farm, can produce 1400 KW per year. The system requires no maintenance and has an expected lifespan of 30 years. During the next three decades, the Snodgrass's will be harvesting the energy from the sun and taking advantage of the earth's most abundant natural resource.

The solar electric power system was made by Solerx Corporation of Frederick, a leading manufacturer of solar systems nationwide. The installation was handled by Atlantic Solar of Baltimore, a statewide distributor of solar electric power systems.

(Above) The solar panels on the roof of Ed and Lucie Snodgrass' barn reduces electricity cost for many years to come.

Solar Farms on TV

In September, News Night Maryland reported on the installation of the first PV system funded by the Solar for Farms Program during a segment on renewable energy sources. Chris Cook, assistant director of Maryland Energy Administration, and JP Miller of Atlantic Solar were featured. At left, installation of the panels is in progress.



Innovative Solutions: State Rural Development Partnerships Nationwide

As independent, grass-roots organizations, state rural development councils (RDCs) have responded to a wide range of challenges. Many solutions the councils have facilitated bring together partners who do not have a history of working together. Here are just a few examples.

- **Alaska** RDC partnered with government and private-sector partners to raise more than \$125,000 for the Small Business Development Center's rural outreach program.

- **Ohio** RDC brought partners together to create Ohio's Family Farm Loan Guarantee Program, which helps farmers acquire a farm, expand an existing farm or start an agribusiness.

- **Florida** RDC partnered with Gifts In Kind, a non-profit organization that donates to charities worldwide, to bring in more than \$2.4 million worth of products to rural areas.

- **Kansas** RDC initiated the first primary care contract between the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and a local health care provider. This collaboration created better, more convenient services for rural veterans and led to an almost 60 percent increase in patient load at the first facility.

- **Minnesota** RDC and new immigrants collaborated to create the New Immigrant Agricultural Project, which helps new immigrants develop existing farm skills and move toward self-sufficiency.

- **Mississippi** Rural Development Council initiated a Wheels-to-Work program to provide transportation to individuals, including rural residents, transitioning from welfare to work.

- **Montana** RDC joined with the Neighborhood Network Center to provide weekly computer classes on how to use computers and internet technology. §

With Thanks to Our Partners

The FORVM works with many partners whose important contributions are vital to our success.

We extend our sincere appreciation to **Secretary Richard C. Mike Lewin and Deputy Secretary David Iannucci** of the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development for their contributions during the last several months. Both men have been especially supportive of the FORVM's work to promote microenterprise development opportunities. We also acknowledge the cooperation of many folks in the DBED Divisions of Administration, Regional Development, and Business Development for making our working environment pleasant and productive.

Second, we extend special thanks to **Garrett and Wicomico Counties, and the Towns of Hurlock, LaPlata, New Windsor, North Beach, and Taneytown** for helping to sponsor the FORVM's exhibit display at the Maryland Municipal League and Maryland Association of Counties Conventions last summer. The FORVM especially values its collaborative partnership with rural county and municipal governments.

Finally, we appreciate the work that our colleagues in Washington do on our behalf. To **Dave Sears, Vaughn Collins, Ella Ennis** and the great staff at the National Rural Partnership Office, and to **Sarah Hicks** and members of the National Rural Development Council, thank you for all you do for Rural America! §



The FORVM's Year in Review **R**ural Communities, Concerns & Consensus

At the start of this new century, the Maryland economy, like the national economy, is running full throttle. Maryland's agriculture industry has produced a bumper crop of corn and soybeans, and the state's historically downtrodden urban and rural regions are experiencing a positive up-tick in the traditional indicators of success. Unemployment rates are down. Consumer confidence is up.

Still, several counties in Western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore have unemployment rates significantly above the statewide average. Poor access to quality health care, the continuing loss of viable farm and forest land, a crumbling infrastructure, and the low availability of suitable housing and reliable transportation remain serious challenges for Marylanders to solve.

The FORVM for Rural Maryland identifies important issues facing rural communities and brings together diverse groups of people and policy-makers to work toward improving the quality of life in Rural Maryland. At the close of Fiscal Year 2000, thanks to the efforts of many of our partners, the FORVM is better positioned than ever to help rural communities achieve a better tomorrow. Here are some highlights of the year just concluded.

Eastern Shore Economic Development

At the request of The Eastern Shore General Assembly Delegation, Governor Parris Glendening appointed the Eastern Shore Economic Development Task Force late last year. More than 100 people from across the Eastern Shore met over several months to study and craft short- and long-term solutions to many challenging economic problems.

Eight subcommittees of the task force, composed of members from each of the nine Eastern Shore counties, submitted individual and regional issues, concerns, and recommendations which the steering committee outlined by economic area. The task force's final report forms the basis of a comprehensive, long-range regional economic development strategy, both for individual counties and the Eastern Shore as a whole.

To preserve the integrity of the Eastern Shore, the Task Force agreed that the following six recommendations require immediate attention.

- 1) Create water and wastewater treatment systems as identified in individual county master plans to handle current and future needs.
- 2) Establish funding mechanisms, organize producer cooperatives, and promote production and marketing alternatives to enhance the sustainability of the agriculture and seafood industries. Use the statewide study currently underway to examine the impact of agriculture and poultry on Eastern Shore economy.

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The FORVM's Year in Review



3) Implement a high-speed fiber-optic network on the Eastern Shore to meet current and future needs.

4) Promote the development of an integrated regional public transportation system for the entire Eastern Shore and Delmarva area that includes securing long-term funding (at least five years) from the Maryland Mass Transit Administration and the Federal government.

5) Support local Workforce Investment Boards efforts to aid in motivating and training residents seeking to participate in the labor force.

6) Create two permanent regional planning organizations, charged with planning for and taking the required steps in achieving the desired business, economic, and community outcomes for the regions, including the timely implementation of the recommendations of the Eastern Shore Economic Development Task Force.

The Task Force and the Eastern Shore Delegation has asked the FORVM, in the role of a neutral facilitator, to help implement this last recommendation by working collaboratively with local officials to establish these regional councils. The FORVM will be working diligently toward that end in coming months. §

Microenterprise Development

Microenterprise development remained a top priority for the FORVM again this year. A microenterprise is a business that employs five or fewer people (including a sole owner), has an inadequate capacity to access traditional business services (such as sources of capital and business technical assistance), and has a capitalization need of \$25,000 or less.

A "microenterprise" is a business that employs five or fewer people (including a sole owner), has an inadequate capacity to access traditional business services (such as sources of capital and business technical assistance), and has a capitalization need of \$25,000 or less.

Working in partnership with several urban- and rural-based nonprofit organizations, state legislators and a handful of public sector agencies, the FORVM early in 2000 helped establish a nonprofit organization called the Microenterprise Council of Maryland. The council functions as a statewide network of microenterprise practitioners, lenders, and various support organizations.

In February, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend agreed to secure monies in the state budget for microenterprise development. The Departments of Housing and Community Development and Business and Economic Development provided \$185,000 about half of which will be used as seed money for the fledgling council (which is currently chaired by FORVM Executive Director Stephen McHenry and partly staffed by the FORVM). The other funding will go to fund a pilot microenterprise development grant program to be administered with the assistance of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCH).

Special thanks go to the Lt. Governor for her considerable interest in this initiative, as well as to Del. Nancy Kopp and Sen. Mac Middleton for spearheading the legislative effort, and to senior staffs at DCHD and DBED for their support of this effort. §

New council supports very small entrepreneurs

The new, nonprofit Microenterprise Council of Maryland functions as a statewide network of microenterprise practitioners, lenders, and various support organizations to:

- Develop outreach, education, and training programs in microentrepreneurship;
- Serve as a clearinghouse and resource center for microenterprise development;
- Increase the capacity of microenterprise development practitioner organizations and programs;
- Develop financial resources for microenterprise development practitioner organizations and programs;
- Identify state and local regulatory barriers to microenterprise development;
- Develop model local ordinances that promote microenterprise development in the areas of planning and zoning, building and permitting, telecommunications, health regulations and licensing approvals;
- Recommend tax policies that encourage the development of micro-businesses;
- Identify alternative group benefit programs for microenterprises (health insurance, retirement plans, etc.);
- Track and document the progress of microenterprise development in Maryland; and
- Develop recommendations for microenterprise development that supports sustainable human resource and community development. §

Second Annual Rural Summit

The 1999 Rural Development and Health Care Summit was held at the Sheraton Fontainebleau Hotel in Ocean City, November 15 – 17.

1999 Rural Summit Award Winners

Outstanding Legislator Award

Casper R. Taylor, Jr.
Speaker of the House

Outstanding Rural Community Development Program

Homeless Are Never
Denied Services,
Worcester County

Outstanding Rural Economic Development Program

Vehicles for Change,
Carroll County Department
of Social Services

Outstanding Rural Health Practitioner

M. Dudley Phillips, M.D.

Outstanding Rural Health Achievement

Bill Wood, Tri State
Community Health Center

Outstanding Rural Health Program

Lower Shore Perinatal
Council

1999 Rural Development & Health Care Summit



Donna Mennito, Maryland Director of the American Farmland Trust, provides important information about recent farmland losses in Maryland.



DHHM Secretary Dr. Georges Benjamin speaks on cancer research and smoking cessation program.



Networking opportunities are plentiful at each Rural Summit meeting.



*(Above)
Ocean City
Mayor Jim
Mathias
welcomes
the crowd to
his home-
town.*

*(Right)
FORVM
Board
Members
Kevin
Brooks
and Dale
Maginnis
enjoy a
light
moment.*



*Keynote speaker
Chuck Fluharty,
Director of the
Rural Policy
Research
Institute, opens
the three day
Summit.*

1999 Townhall Meeting



The Honorable Casper R. Taylor Jr., Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, addresses Summit participants at a Statewide Rural Town Hall Meeting.

Summit participants representing a wide range of rural-serving organizations ask questions and express opinions to state policymakers.



Committees at Work



The FORVM's Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Committee was one of the busiest during the last year and worked to convince the General Assembly to create a Task Force on Resource Based Industries.

The FORVM's Health Care Working Committee concentrated on issues related to health care access in rural communities.



Maryland Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Hagner Mister and Past FORVM Chair Duane Yoder talk shop during a break.



Rosemarie (Dodie) Lazzatti, Executive Director of Maryland Capital Enterprises, speaks on microenterprise development programming on the Eastern Shore during a Summit breakout session.



Maryland House Speaker Cas Taylor (right) and USDA State Rural Development Director Jack Walls.

The Maryland Infrastructure Problem

In 1999, the Maryland Office of Planning (now the Maryland Department of Planning) reported on its "Infrastructure Needs Survey" in which all local governments participated. The survey studied the current and long-range infrastructure needs of state and local government, whether these needs were budgeted or not, and whether the needs were for renovation of existing facilities, construction backlog, or for anticipated new growth.

The counties and municipalities reported 7,481 infrastructure needs with an estimated cost of \$25.9 billion. State agencies reported 1,175 infrastructure needs with a cost of about \$15.4 billion.

The largest number of long- and short-term needs reported by local governments are in five categories: roads and bridges; schools and colleges; sewage facilities; water facilities; and parks and recreation.

Local governments also reported that 42.4% of their needs were for rehabilitation, 32.2% were for back log, and 28.3% were for growth. Not surprisingly, the report showed that Western Maryland and Eastern Shore governments have a proportionately greater share of unbudgeted infrastructure needs.

The Department of Planning drew the following conclusions: 1) There is a big funding gap for infrastructure, and local governments need to better direct their limited infrastructure funding; 2) Local governments should improve capital life cycle planning; 3) Capital facility planning and coordination between jurisdictions and agencies should be improved; and 4) Information on infrastructure needs is widely variable among jurisdictions. §



The FORVM's Year in Review

FORVM Working Committees meet to address uniquely rural problems

To more effectively address the plethora of public policy issues affecting Rural Maryland, the FORVM's Executive Board last year established several "Working Committees." These problem-addressing committees are made up of FORVM members, interested rural citizens, and officials from affected government agencies, advocacy groups and academia. The working committees are designed to provide the FORVM Executive Board and public policymakers with information, suggestions, and recommended positions on issues that impact Rural Maryland, as well as serve as a conduit for citizens and government agencies to exchange information. These committees are neutral forums where all rural stakeholders are welcome, and where decisions are generally made by consensus.

Health Care Working Committee

The FORVM's Health Care Working Committee, chaired by Michael Spurrier, Director of Frederick Community Action, recently determined that the overall major health-related problem for Rural Marylanders is access to adequate health services. The committee identified three areas that need significant funding and support:

1. Development and ongoing operating support for an adequate telemedicine infrastructure;
2. Public education informing rural Marylanders about the availability of existing state programs such as Maryland Primary Care and Pharmacy Assistance; and
3. Funding and better coordination of rural health transportation efforts.

The committee is also concerned about the pull out of managed care organizations from 17 rural counties in Maryland. More work will likely have to be done in coming months to address this problem. §

Infrastructure Working Committee

The Infrastructure Working Committee, led by Taneytown Manager Chip Boyles, followed the work of the State Sep-

tic Systems Advisory Committee, which was formed during the summer of 1999. The advisory committee studied on-site septic disposal systems and discovered that the State had 30,000 failing septic systems which polluted water supplies and created a need for better nutrient reduction technology. Many communities with failing septic systems are old crossroads rural communities with small lots, poor soil, and septic systems that discharge directly to ground or surface waters. A number of these are located in low income and minority communities. Often these systems cannot be repaired by conventional means and the cost of providing some type of treatment can be considerable.

As a result of the FORVM Infrastructure Working Committee's work, the FORVM's Executive Board petitioned the task force to support funding and other infrastructure assistance for rural communities.

In the future, the committee also hopes to address rural solid waste management, storm water management, railroad rights-of-way protection and rail spur financing issues. §

The FORVM's Year in Review



Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

The Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Committee, chaired by Wicomico County President Russell Molnar, was probably the FORVM's busiest Working Committee this year.

The committee's major objective was to encourage the development of policies and programs that promote sustainable agriculture and other natural resource-based industries and to help ensure that these industries are better represented in state policy debates and economic development efforts by helping policy-makers understand the importance of these businesses.

Rural resource-based industries face many similar challenges: changing market conditions, lack of access to capital for innovative economic activities, and a lack of experience in "value-added" business planning and production. These industries also face special challenges in adapting to dramatic economic and technological changes. As a consequence, Maryland is not only losing an important component of the rural economic base but is seeing its land resources (farm and forest land) gobbled up at an alarming rate by development pressure. Farm and timber operation viability is a critical link in the state's ongoing effort to preserve open spaces.

Task Force on Resource-Based Industry

During the Fall, the committee held a number of meetings to discuss the possibility of creating an "Agriculture and Natural Resources Development Authority." A consensus emerged that a public entity should be responsible for providing loans (primarily for nontraditional business activity) and the corresponding training and technical assistance necessary to make such a program successful.

The committee created a subcommittee last fall to flesh out the details of how a natural resource-based financing authority might be structured. After considerable study, the subcommittee recommended the creation of a statewide task force, which would study the need for establishing a financing development authority to help the farming, fishing, forestry and mineral extraction industries with loans, training and business planning assistance services.

During the 2000 Session of the General Assembly, the FORVM initiated legislation to establish a 17-member Task Force on Resource Based Industry in Maryland. Senate Bill 446 and House Bill 933 were sponsored by the state's four Rural Delegations and passed easily in both the House and Senate. The task force will begin its work this fall.

In a matter related to a financing entity for resource-based industries, the FORVM requested the General Assembly to include \$3.5 million in the state budget to build the Agribusiness Incubator Hub Facility at the Maryland Food Center Authority in Jessup. This facility would ultimately bring business training, technical assistance and commercial processing facilities to rural communities statewide and benefit all natural resource-based industries. Despite considerable effort by many rural legislators and others, this project received no funding for FY 2001. §

A new Working Committee on Housing and Community Development is being formed in the near future. Contact Duane Yoder, President of Garrett County Community Action, if you might be interested. 301/334-9431. §

Ag Committee IDs key issues

Last fall, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Committee identified several key issues for Maryland policy-makers to consider:

1. Reevaluate agriculture and forestry industry needs in the context of state economic development efforts. Recognize that resource based industries provide an essential underpinning for the state's rural economies.
2. Develop and disseminate better economic data on the impact of agriculture and forestry on the state economy. Do better market analysis for Maryland products.
3. Develop new financial incentives and provide appropriate regulatory relief for Maryland's agriculture and forestry industries that are largely made up of small businesses. Promote value-added opportunities for agriculture and secondary value-added product development for forestry.
4. Provide more financial support to the aquaculture and seafood industries by promoting technology development and better marketing. Provide more financial support to the Maryland Forest Service (Department of Natural Resources) and local forestry boards.
5. Better protect agriculture and forestland from unnecessary and costly sprawl development. Consider more carefully the water resources that may be needed for agriculture in the land development context.
6. Explore expanding the use of renewable energy fuels from biomass products. Encourage the state government to purchase more flexible-fueled vehicles – that use ethanol – to meet the federal mandate. Increase the sustainable harvests of trees in Maryland, especially in areas where there is an oversupply of timber. §

Organizations offer time and support to working committee's effort

The FORVM's Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Committee held four full committee meetings and several subcommittee meetings during the year. The following organizations and governmental units participated in one or more of these meetings:

American Farmland Trust/Mid-Atlantic Division
 Association of Forest Industries
 Department of Business and Economic Development – Maryland with Pride Program
 Department of Natural Resources – Maryland Forest Service
 Department of Natural Resources – Maryland Fisheries Service
 Governor's Maryland Forestry Task Force
 Harford County Department of Economic Development
 Institute for Governmental Service (U.M./College Park)
 LEAD Maryland (Maryland's Agricultural Leadership Program)
 Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation
 Maryland Department of Agriculture – Agribusiness Marketing; Executive Administration; Agricultural Statistics Service; and Resource Conservation
 Maryland Farm Bureau
 Maryland Food Center Authority
 Maryland Forests Association
 Maryland Aggregates Association
 Maryland Energy Administration
 Maryland Grain Producers Association
 Maryland Public Interest Research Group (MaryPIRG)
 Maryland State Grange
 Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council
 University of Maryland - Maryland Cooperative Extension.

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General Assembly



Legislation:

Checking in on the General Assembly

Below is a brief update on some of the legislation the FORVM followed during the 2000 Session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Fund Act of 2000 **Senate Bill 679/House Bill 932**

Passed during the 2000 Session, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Act (MAE&RDAF) provides \$347,000 to help rural-serving nonprofit organizations and community colleges in the areas of economic development, community development and agricultural/forestry education.

The goal of the legislation is to increase the overall capacity of rural-serving organizations to meet a multitude of rural development challenges and to encourage the development of new public-private partnerships that will bring these organizations new sources of non-state funding.

This permanent non-lapsing fund will be administered as a competitive grants program. A four-member grant review board will consist of representatives from the FORVM, the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED), the Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of Agriculture. DEBD will administer the grants which must be approved by the Board of Public Works.

The FORVM led this initiative after many regional and statewide rural serving nonprofits expressed frustration over their inability to access private and public sources of funding as readily as their counterparts in more affluent metro areas. The FORVM responded to this serious resource deficit and helped conceive the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund Act.

The FORVM Board believed that the Act would be an excellent compliment to the

See next page please



Supporters of the MAE&RDAF Act 2000, including several FORVM board and staff members, look on as the governor and presiding officers of the General Assembly sign the bill into law.

The FORVM's Year in Review

landmark "One Maryland" legislation, passed in 1999 to assist economically distressed rural counties by providing state support to medium- and large-sized businesses for significant new job creation opportunities. The MAE&RDAF bill was intended to build on the One Maryland vision by providing important foundation support to rural regional planning and economic development agencies and rural community development efforts. The bill will also augment community college efforts to support smaller, natural resource-based businesses through enhanced training and technical assistance opportunities offered by the Advanced Technology Centers.

An important goal of the bill was to help rural serving organization use this new state funding to gain credibility for their projects which would strengthen their efforts to obtain non-state funding. The Act includes a provision that, after the first year funding is made available, only those applications that have obtained matching non-state funds will be considered for assistance.

The Act also expresses the General Assembly's intent that the FORVM receive state funding equal to its federal funding every year. This successfully ends a two-year effort by the FORVM's Executive Board to obtain substantial state funding. §

Increased Funding for the Regional Resource Libraries

Senate Bill 679/House Bill 932

The General Assembly passed legislation (Senate Bill 650/House Bill 1185) that substantially increases funding for the regional resource libraries serving Western Maryland, Southern Maryland and the Eastern Shore.

Before this legislation passed, each regional library received a grant amount calculated at \$1.70 per capita. Under the new legislation, funding amounts will be calculated at \$3.50 per capita in FY 2002, \$4.00 per capita in FY 2003, and \$4.50 per capita in FY 2004 and beyond. More specifically, next year state funding will increase by \$408,800 for the Western Maryland Regional Resource Center, by \$521,500 for the Southern Maryland Regional Resource Center, and by \$544,300 for the Eastern Shore Regional Resource Center.

These three regional libraries serve 14 rural counties by providing library services comparable to those found in more affluent metropolitan counties, including consulting and training, cataloging and materials processing, regional databases, electronic magazine access, automated circulation and catalog systems, electronic networking and rotating collections. State funding for these facilities is vital because rural governments do not have the local revenues necessary to provide a complete range of important library services. This law guarantees that regional libraries will have a stable source of revenue available to fund long-term commitments for library services.

Task Force on Resource-Based Industry

The General Assembly, at the request of the FORVM's Working Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, passed House Bill 933 this year that establishes a task force to study resource-based industries. For more on this, see page 9. §



An emerging area of emphasis:

Rural Leadership Development

Enhancing leadership development in rural communities is an emerging concern for the FORVM.

For example, during the last two years, the FORVM has actively supported LEAD Maryland — the state's new agricultural leadership development program. FORVM Executive Director Stephen McHenry was selected to be a member of the first class of LEAD fellows.

The 23 fellows from all across Maryland devoted 30 days of study over the last two years to such topics as: agricultural and natural resource industries; the rural and statewide economy; international trade; land-use practices; federal, state and local government policy-making; and even community development and poverty issues in Maryland.

When new resources become available, the FORVM plans to establish a Working Committee on Rural Leadership Development. §

*LEAD Maryland's
first graduating
class*

FORVM FOR RURAL MARYLAND

Maryland's Rural
Development Council

Statement of Principles

As a collaborative partnership, the FORVM shall be established and operated in a nonpartisan and nondiscriminatory manner. Policy-makers and managers from stakeholding agencies and organizations at all levels of government and the private sector are valued participants in FORVM activities. Where practical, the decision-making undertaken by the FORVM will ordinarily be made by reaching consensus.

Major Goals

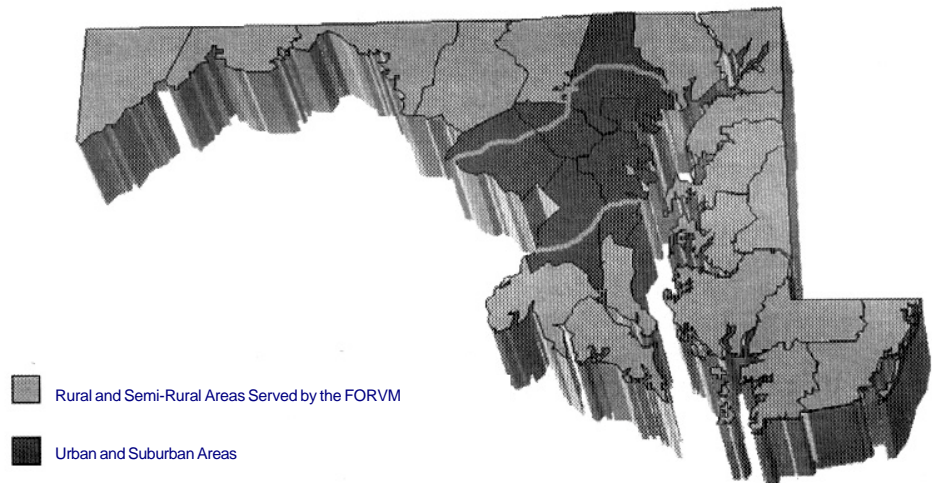
- ◆ Enable citizens in rural communities to achieve success in employment and have access to quality, affordable health care, and other services.
- ◆ Preserve agriculture and other natural resource-based industries as an integral part of Maryland's rural economy and culture.
- ◆ Advocate for a manageable regulatory process and reasonable and effective compliance.
- ◆ Address the impact of changing conditions on the environment, heritage and economic well being of rural Marylanders.

Our Mission



The mission for the FORVM is to build a bright future for Rural Maryland by helping to address its unique concerns. The FORVM works toward achieving effective solutions by bringing together the diverse partnerships necessary to collectively work to improve the quality of life for Rural Maryland.

Maryland's Rural and Semi-Rural Areas



A Collective Voice for Building a Brighter Future

To add your voice and partner with us, please contact:

The FORVM for Rural Maryland

Mayor William F. Eckman
Chairman

Stephen R. McHenry
Executive Director

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Our website is currently under re-design.

Please check with us soon at www.ruralforvm.state.md.us